

# HEMINGWAY MANUAL

## HEMINGWAY OVERVIEW

We use the [Hemingway Editor](https://hemingwayapp.com) (hemingwayapp.com), to guide our writing. It makes content more uniform throughout our site and, most importantly, makes our content more readable for all.

## HOW IT WORKS

The Hemingway Editor highlights common problems that can get in the way of clear writing:

- Complex words or phrases
- Extra-long sentences
- Long sentences
- Too many adverbs
- Too many instances of passive voice

It color codes each potential error type, so you can address them one at a time.

The screenshot displays the Hemingway Editor interface. At the top, there is a toolbar with options: Bold, Italic, H1, H2, H3, Quote, Bullets, Numbers, and Link. Below the toolbar, the main text area contains the following content:

**Hemingway App makes your writing bold and clear.**

The app highlights lengthy, complex sentences and common errors; if you see a yellow sentence, shorten or split it. If you see a red highlight, your sentence is so dense and complicated that your readers will get lost trying to follow its meandering, splitting logic — try editing this sentence to remove the red.

You can utilize a shorter word in place of a purple one. Mouse over them for hints.

Adverbs and weakening phrases are helpfully shown in blue. Get rid of them and pick words with force, perhaps.

Phrases in green have been marked to show passive voice.

You can format your text with the toolbar.

Paste in something you're working on and edit away. Or, click the Write button and compose something new.

On the right side, there is a sidebar with the following information:

- Hemingway Editor**
- Readability**
- Grade 6**
- Good**
- Words: 133**
- Show More** (dropdown arrow)
- 2** adverbs, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1** use of passive voice, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1** phrase has a simpler alternative.
- 1** of 11 sentences is hard to read.
- 1** of 11 sentences is very hard to read.

## HOW TO WORK WITH HEMINGWAY

1. Read the sample text for tips
2. Delete the sample text from the Edit mode screen

The screenshot shows the Hemingway Editor interface. At the top is a toolbar with options: Bold, Italic, H1, H2, H3, Quote, Bullets, Numbers, and Link. Below the toolbar is a large text area containing sample text. A red rounded rectangle highlights this text area. The text includes tips on using highlights (yellow for lengthy sentences, red for dense sentences, purple for words to replace, blue for adverbs, green for passive voice) and instructions on using the toolbar. To the right of the text area is a sidebar with the Hemingway Editor logo, Readability score (Grade 6, Good), Word count (133), and a list of five writing tips with corresponding counts.

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**Hemingway Editor**

**Readability**  
Grade 6  
Good

Words: 133  
Show More ▾

- 2 adverbs, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1 use of passive voice, meeting the goal of 2 or fewer.
- 1 phrase has a simpler alternative.
- 1 of 11 sentences is hard to read.
- 1 of 11 sentences is very hard to read.

3. Either copy and paste or type your content directly into the now empty space

The screenshot shows the Hemingway Editor interface with the same toolbar as the previous image. The text area is now empty, with a placeholder text "[Type or paste something to get started...]" at the top. A red rounded rectangle highlights this empty text area. The sidebar on the right remains the same, showing the Hemingway Editor logo, Readability score (Grade 0, Good), Word count (0), and a list of five writing tips with corresponding counts.

[Type or paste something to get started...]

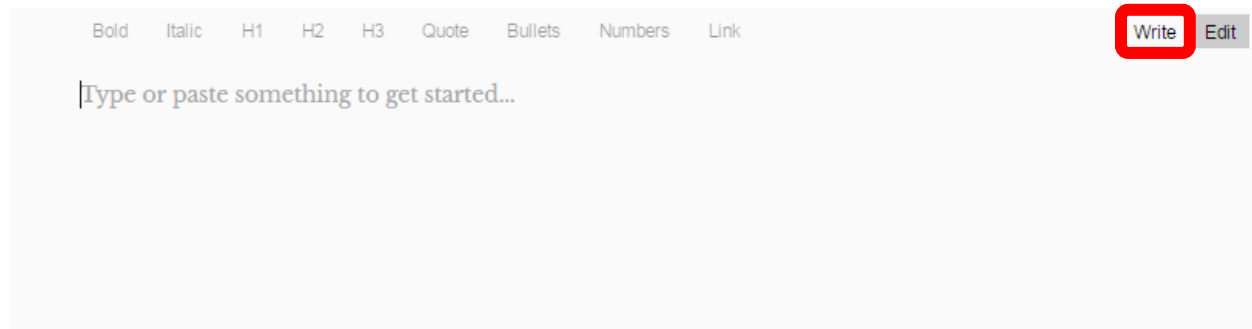
**Hemingway Editor**

**Readability**  
Grade 0  
Good

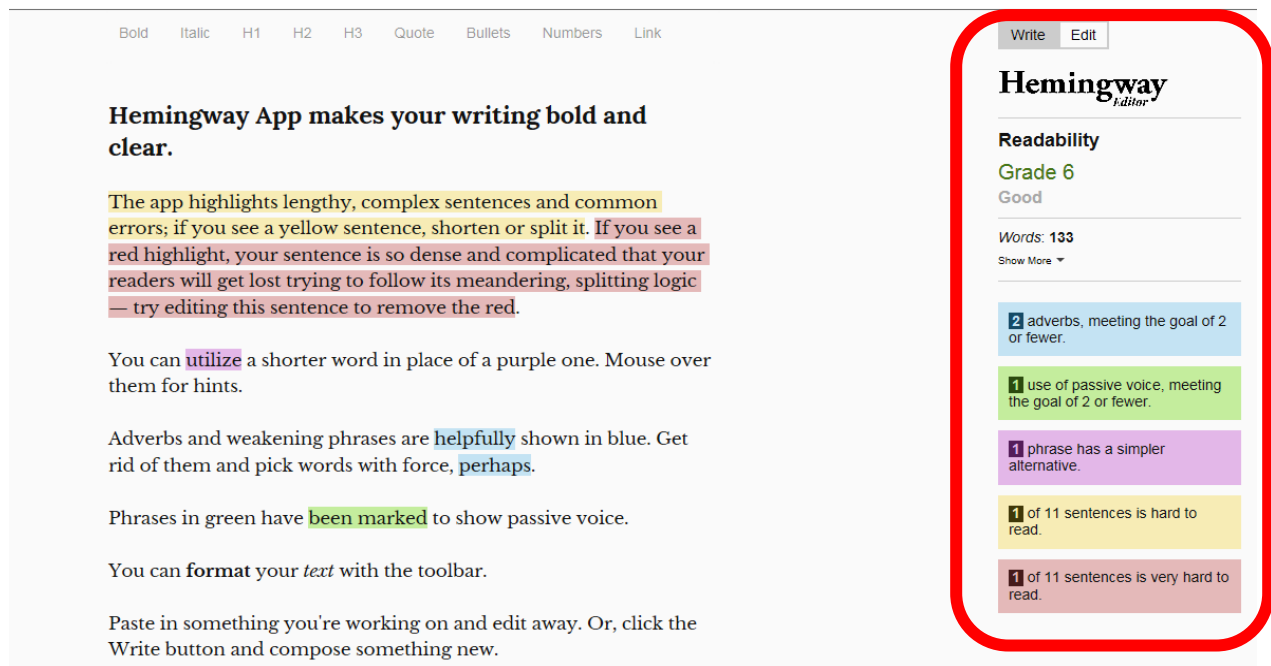
Words: 0  
Show More ▾

- 0 adverbs. Well done.
- 0 uses of passive voice. Nice work.
- 0 phrases have simpler alternatives.
- 0 of 0 sentences are hard to read.
- 0 of 0 sentences are very hard to read.

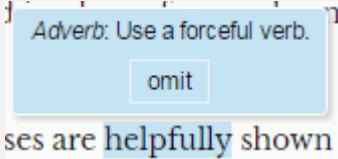
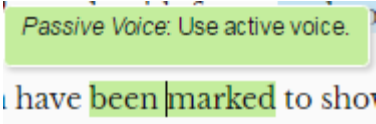
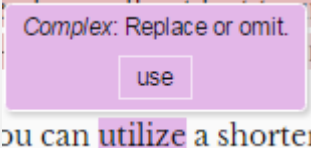
- The default mode is “Edit” (highlighted white). You can click the “Write” button to toggle to the write mode (now highlighted white). Here the suggested edits are not displayed so you can type without distractions.



- Use the suggested edits from the right hand side panel



## Glossary of Hemingway Edits

Edit Type	Description	Recommended Action(s)
<b>Adverbs</b>	<p>Words or phrases that modify an adjective, verb or other adverb. They often end in –ly</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid using adverbs – they either tell the reader what they already know or they use too many words to communicate an image or idea</li> <li>Hemingway will generally tell you to omit adverbs or to use a more forceful verb</li> </ul>	
<b>Passive Voice</b>	<p>Occurs when the object of the sentence is performing the action instead of the subject.</p> <p>Avoid this: “The ordinance was approved by City Commission”</p> <p>Do this: “City Commission approved the ordinance”</p> <p>The <b>subject</b> (City Commission) <b>performs the action</b> (approving) on the object (the ordinance)</p>	
<b>Complex Phrasing</b>	<p>A sentence can be simplified by using simpler alternatives to difficult to read words or phrases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hover over the words highlighted purple for Hemingway’s suggestion.</li> <li>Click the suggested word to make the replacement. If that word does not work well, find an appropriate replacement using your own judgment or a thesaurus</li> </ul>	
<b>Hard to Read</b>	<p>Sentences are long and complex and could also contain errors.</p> <p>Hemingway does not provide suggested edits.</p> <p>Shorten or split the sentence and correct the common errors (if applicable)</p>	<p><b>Simple fix from this:</b></p> <p>The area on Ionia Street north of Michigan has seen an influx of daily parkers resulting from increased developments.</p> <p><b>To this:</b></p> <p>The area on Ionia Street north of Michigan has seen an influx of daily parkers. This is a direct result of increased developments.</p>

## Glossary of Hemingway Edits

Edit Type	Description	Recommended Action(s)
<b>Very Hard to Read</b>	<p>Very hard to read sentences need to be split and rephrased. Use simpler terminology and a clear, direct sentence structure.</p> <p>Ask yourself: how would I say this sentence in a conversation? Often in verbal communication we say things more simply than in written communication.</p>	<p><b>This complex sentence doesn't use common language:</b></p> <p>Parking requirements are not intended to be punitive, but maintain on-street parking availability for everyone.</p> <p><b>When split, it is easier to read and more direct:</b></p> <p>Parking requirements are not intended to be punitive. Rates are meant to ensure on-street parking is available for everyone.</p>

## LET'S REVIEW VERB TENSES

Verb tense tells you when a person did something or when something existed or happened. Content can be written in the past, present and future tense. It is appropriate for multiple tenses to exist in the same piece of content, paragraph or even sentence if you follow the correct grammar rules (see pages 13-14).

- Past Tense: Describes things that have already happened
- Present Tense: Describes things happening right now or things that are continuous
- Future Tense: Describes things that have yet to happen

There are various uses for each verb tense – **simple, continuous perfect and perfect continuous**.

Proper Use of Verb Tenses		
<i><b>Simple Present</b></i>	<i><b>Simple Past</b></i>	<i><b>Simple Future</b></i>
I read nearly every day.	Last night I read an entire novel.	I will read as much as I can this year.
<i><b>Present Continuous</b></i>	<i><b>Past Continuous</b></i>	<i><b>Future Continuous</b></i>
I am reading Shakespeare at the moment.	I was reading Edgar Allan Poe last night.	I will be reading Nathaniel Hawthorne soon.
<i><b>Present Perfect</b></i>	<i><b>Past Perfect</b></i>	<i><b>Future Perfect</b></i>
I have read so many books I can't keep count.	I had read at least 100 books by the time I was twelve.	I will have read at least 500 books by the end of the year.
<i><b>Present Perfect Continuous</b></i>	<i><b>Past Perfect Continuous</b></i>	<i><b>Future Perfect Continuous</b></i>
I have been reading since I was four years old.	I had been reading for at least a year before my sister learned to read.	I will have been reading for at least two hours before dinner tonight.

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## PAST

Regular verbs in the past tense follow patterns. These are categorized as affirmative, negative, interrogative and interrogative negative

Affirmative		
Subject	+ verb + ed	
<i>I</i>	<i>skipped</i>	
Negative		
Subject	+ did not	+ infinitive without "to"
<i>They</i>	<i>didn't</i>	<i>go</i>
Interrogative		
Did	+ subject	+ infinitive without "to"
<i>Did</i>	<i>she</i>	<i>arrive?</i>
Interrogative negative		
Did not	+ subject	+ infinitive without "to"
<i>Didn't</i>	<i>you</i>	<i>play?</i>

## SIMPLE PAST

Used to talk about things that happened or existed before now. For regular verbs, add **-ed** to the root form of the verb (or just **-d** if the root form already ends in e)

Type – Typed

Listen – Listened

Simple past forms of irregular forms do not follow easily identifiable patterns:

See – Saw

Build – Built

## PAST PERFECT

Used to talk about actions that were completed before something else happened in the past.

Formula: *had + [past participle]*

Had written

Had built

Use past perfect when you're talking about some point in the past and want to reference an event that happened even earlier. Using past perfect allows you to convey the sequence of the events. It is also clearer and more specific.

*She **had attended** the training session before changing their business process.*

Another time to use the past perfect is when you are expressing a condition and a result:

*If I **had attended** the training, I would have learned this already.*

In this case, the past perfect is used in the part of the sentence that explains the condition (the if-clause).

- Writing an entire paragraph with every verb in the past perfect tense is unusual
- Don't use the past perfect when you're not trying to convey some sequence of events.



## PAST CONTINUOUS

Past continuous tense is used to refer to several temporal situations.

Formula: *be* + present participle (the root word = -ing)

*It **was raining***

*He **was** out **walking***

*They **were working** on the report*

Don't use past continuous tense with non-action verbs like *seem* and *know*. These verbs should use the simple past.

*I **was writing** the report.*

*I **wrote** the report.*

## PAST PERFECT CONTINUOUS

The past perfect continuous is used when one activity in the past was happening before or after another activity had taken place.

Formula: *have* + *been* + present participle

*The residents **had been waiting** for the meeting to begin for an hour*

*Before moving to her current position, she **had been training** her replacement for two weeks.*

Don't use past perfect continuous tense with non-action verbs like *be*, *seem* and *know*. These verbs should use the past perfect

*He **had been being** happy with his job.*

*He **had been** happy with his job.*

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## PRESENT

### SIMPLE PRESENT

We use simple present tense when an action is happening right now:

*I **feel** great*

*She **likes** her job*

*I'm sorry to **hear** that you're sick*

Or when an action happens regularly (habitual actions or occurrences):

*He **travels** for work*

*She **practices** typing every day.*

*The computer **runs** all day*

Formula: most regular verbs use the root form or some add **–s** or **–es** to the end

	First Person	Second Person	Third Person
Singular	<i>I write</i>	<i>You write</i>	<i>He/she/it writes</i>
Plural	<i>We write</i>	<i>You write</i>	<i>They write</i>

### PRESENT PERFECT

Used when an action began in the past yet is still relevant.

Formula: *have*+ the past participle

*I **have seen***

*You **have seen***

*She **has asked** for the day off*

## PRESENT CONTINUOUS

We use this tense to indicate that an action or condition is happening now, frequently, and may continue into the future.

Formula: *to be* [am, is, are] + verb [present participle]

*They **are eating** lunch at the café*

*They **are building** a new development downtown*

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## FUTURE

### SIMPLE FUTURE

Used to talk about things that haven't happened yet

Formula: *will* + root form of verb

*She **will facilitate** the meeting*

*He **will train** the class*

### FUTURE PERFECT

We use future perfect tense for actions that will be completed before some other point in the future.

Formula: *will have* + past participle

*At 6 o'clock I **will have left** already*

Keep in mind that future perfect tense is only for actions that will be complete before a specified point in the future. The action you're talking about must have a deadline (i.e. 8 o'clock, next week, after the parade ends, etc.)

## FUTURE CONTINUOUS

We use future continuous to relate one action in the future to another specific action or time

Formula: *will + be + present participle (root word + -ing)*

*We **will be going** to the gym after work*

***Will** you **be joining** us?*

*I'll **be returning** to work next Thursday*

Don't use the future continuous tense with non-action verbs like *seem*, *know* and *be*. These verbs should use the simple future.

*She **will be being** here at 3:00.*

*She **will be** here at 3:00.*

## FUTURE PERFECT CONTINUOUS

We use future perfect continuous similar to the future perfect, but one of the actions is likely to continue beyond the other. It can also be used when one action will be continuing at a certain time in the future.

Formula: *will + have + been + present participle (root + -ing)*. Look for key words such as *in* and *by*.

*In September, I **will have been working** here for ¼ of my life.*

*By 2025, you **will have been working** on this project longer than you've worked on anything else.*

*In three months, they **will have been waiting** for construction to begin for two years.*

Don't use the future perfect continuous tense with non-action verbs like *be*, *seem* and *know*. These verbs should use the future perfect tense.

*Tomorrow, I **will have been being** here for a week.*

*Tomorrow, I **will have been** here for a week.*

## HOW AND WHEN TO KEEP VERB TENSE CONSISTENT

### CONSISTENCY WITHIN A SENTENCE

*Do not* shift from one tense to another if the time frame for each action is the **same**.

**Example:**

The officer **explains** the police academy application process to students who **attended** the recruitment event.

*Explains* is the present tense (current state). *Attended* is the past tense, but should be present (*attend*) because the students are currently continuing to attend during the event timeframe.

**Corrected:**

The officer **explains** the police academy application process to students who **attend** the recruitment event.

*Do* shift from one tense to another if the time frame for the actions is **different**.

**Example:**

The new stop sign **stands** at the corner of Cherry and Wealthy, where residents **kept** complaining of accidents

*Stands* is present tense, referring to a current state (it stands there now). *Kept* is past, referring to an action completed before the current time frame (they are not complaining any more)

Change tense only when there is a need to do so – the timing of actions within a sentence will dictate when the tense must change

**Example:**

When Mary **gets** here, we **will begin**.

First action will  
happen in the future

Second action will  
happen in the future

The first action will take place in the future. Therefore, the second one will as well.

**Example:**

He **completed** the form *after* he **had confirmed** eligibility.

Second action  
happened in the past

First action happened  
before the past action

The second action took place in the past. The first action occurred before the past action. Therefore, the first action requires the past perfect tense (*had* + verb)